

Presbyterian Church  
Northeast corner California Street and Sixth Street  
Jacksonville  
Jackson County  
Oregon

HABS No. ORE-113

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ORE-113

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Location: Northeast corner of California and Sixth Streets,  
Jacksonville, Jackson County, Oregon

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Although the Presbyterians first held services in Jacksonville in 1857,<sup>1</sup> they were the last of the town's religious denominations to build a church of their own. Prior to construction of the Presbyterian Church, Rev. Moses Williams had preached in the Methodist Church,<sup>2</sup> in school houses around the county,<sup>3</sup> and in private houses.<sup>4</sup> In 1878, however, church trustees William Hoffman and C. C. Beekman, purchased a lot at the corner of California and Sixth Streets for \$250.<sup>5</sup> They gave James T. Clenn, attorney to James Cluggage, a note for the principal plus interest at ten percent a year. Within a year, the note was paid by C. C. Beekman,<sup>6</sup> and work was begun to clear away the "shanty on the site of the Presbyterian Church."<sup>7</sup> In November 1879, a contract was awarded to George Holt for the foundation work, and David Linn contracted to complete the frame of the church (including the roof and belfry) and to give the building a coat of paint.<sup>8</sup>

The building was erected between April and July 1880.<sup>9</sup> Late in July, the Democratic Times reported that J. A. Carter was painting the church.<sup>10</sup> In September, Beekman purchased a one-thousand-pound bell;<sup>11</sup> in November, the stained glass windows were installed.<sup>12</sup>

Surviving accounts of the building costs and sources of building funds show that C. C. Beekman assumed personal responsibility for a major share of the expenses. Costs totalled \$6,095.45: Beekman paid \$270.00 for the lot and interest on the note for same; David Linn's bill totalled \$3,965.05; sundry bills "paid by Beekman individually" added another \$1,650.40; painting cost \$100.00, which was paid by Beekman; and the cost of a stove and heater purchased from Kaspar Kubli for \$110.00 was also paid by Beekman. Sources of funds included subscriptions of \$3,202.32, \$549.37 from the Women's Fund, another \$161.37 from the Women's Fund for carpeting and chairs, and \$487.50 from the Board of Church Erection--which sum was refunded to Beekman. When the congregation found itself \$1,694.89 in debt after paying all the bills for construction, Beekman not only assumed the debt but he also had shade trees planted around the church. "There is no claim against the Church unpaid or not assumed," the final construction accounts noted.<sup>13</sup>

The sophistication of the Presbyterian Church design strongly suggests that the building plans were not obtained locally. There is a striking similarity in its design and that of a Presbyterian Church which was built in Eugene, Oregon, in 1882: the latter had a facade that was the mirror image of the Jacksonville church. Since the Board of Church

Erection provided financial assistance to both congregations for the construction of their buildings, the Board may have provided the designs as well.<sup>14</sup>

Although the church was apparently completed in late 1880 and a marriage celebrated there in October 1881,<sup>15</sup> it was not dedicated until December 4, 1881, when Rev. Moses Williams "preached a good dedicatory sermon," as he phrased it in his diary.<sup>16</sup> The Reverend Mr. Williams had come to Jacksonville in 1858 to preach throughout the Rogue River Valley.<sup>17</sup> Aside from congregational affairs and the maintenance of his farm, Mr. Williams' other major interest appears to have been the school system of the county.<sup>18</sup> After the new church was completed, he organized a Sunday School with about fifty students.<sup>19</sup> Although he is remembered as a popular man, the impression derived from his voluminous diaries is that of a somewhat aloof person, caught up in the daily activities involved in running a farm, and by and large uninterested in community affairs or ideas. Although he reports on frequent meetings with other persons, he seldom mentions the content of their discussions--almost as if it were unimportant what was said; neither do chance comments seem to have led him on to further reflections, as is commonly the case with keepers of diaries. Aside from his commentaries on his own house and fields, Mr. Williams makes almost no observations about the outside world and the character of the people. In this respect he is quite unlike Father Francis Xavier Blanchet, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, whose memoirs are replete with commentaries on the American character, the wonder of technology, the size of cities, the good works of his fellow priests, and the growth of his small flock of parishioners in Jacksonville.

The Presbyterian Church is still today an active congregation--unlike the Methodist and Catholic churches of Jacksonville (the former having closed in 1928 and the latter having become a mission church when the parish centered in Jacksonville was transferred to Medford in 1909).

#### FOOTNOTES

1

Presbyterian Church Records, Oregon Historical Society MSS 967B.

2

"Diary of Moses Allen Williams," October 27, 1881, MSS in Jacksonville Museum, Jacksonville, Oregon.

3

Ibid., October 28, 1858, for example.

4

Ibid., November 14, 1858, for example.

5

Jackson County Deeds, July 2, 1878, and Presbyterian Church Records, Oregon Historical Society MSS 967B.

6

Presbyterian Church Records, Oregon Historical Society MSS 967B.

7

The Democratic Times, September 5, 1879.

8

Ibid., November 21, 1879.

9

Ibid., April 2, 1880, and July 9, 1880. The first article reported that George Holt had begun work on the foundation; the second, that the steeple had been completed.

10

Ibid., July 23, 1880. In the Beekman papers at the University of Oregon there is a specification for the paint. The building was to have two coats of white lead and boiled linseed oil, with turpentine added as a dryer. Alcoholic shellac was to be applied over knots and patchy places, cracks were to be puttied, and nail holes were to be filled in. The color was to be ground into the oil before mixing. The basement floor--which was painted to resemble stone blocks with dark mortar joints--was to have two coats of paint (the second with pure white sand applied at the proper time to adhere to the paint, so that the resulting surface would have a texture resembling stone).

11

The Democratic Times, September 3, 1880.

12

Ibid., November 12, 1880.

13

Beekman Papers, University of Oregon.

14

Samuel Sloan, City and Suburban Architecture (Philadelphia, 1867), Design 14, pp. 62-64. This church, in outline, resembles the Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville--their massing and general form are very similar. However, Sloan's design is shown in stone, while the Jacksonville church is frame; as a consequence, the detailing is significantly different. There are other differences: the Jacksonville church sits on a raised basement, while Sloan's church is shown on level ground. The entrance is in the major face of the tower in the Sloan design; it is on the side of the tower in the Jacksonville church. The Sloan church has three windows on the facade; the Jacksonville church, one. On the other hand, the frontispiece of Andrew Jackson Downing's Cottage Residences (1873 edition) shows a church design similar in its general arrangement to the one in Jacksonville--and of wooden construction. While the similarities may be coincidental, it seems possible that the Presbyterian Board of Church Erection may have provided a design by

Sloan or Downing--or may have supplied one copied from a published pattern book--for use in the construction of the Jacksonville Presbyterian Church.

15

"Diary of Moses Allen Williams," October 5, 1881.

16

Ibid., December 4, 1881.

17

Ibid., October 31, 1858, July 11, 1859, April 21, 1871, give examples of his preaching in various parts of the Rogue River Valley.

18

Ibid., January 7, 1865.

19

Ibid., February 5, 1882.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: The building is one story on a raised basement.
2. Number of bays: The front facade is one bay. There are four bays on the side elevations.
3. Layout, shape: The building is rectangular, with an entrance tower projecting from the southwest corner.
4. Wall construction: The walls are frame and sheathed in a variety of patterns. The basement is faced with beveled boarding that was originally painted with white joints over a gray background. The upper part of the building is faced with flush boarding framed between horizontal and vertical members, suggesting half-timber work. The framing and sheathing members were originally painted in contrasting colors. When photographed in 1971, the church was painted white. During the autumn of 1972 it was repainted a deep creamy buff, with dark brown trim.
5. Porches: The tower entrance is approached by a staircase leading to a small porch with an open gabled roof at right angles to the main axis of the church. The hand-rails of the staircase are supported by flat boards with tracery cut-out patterns. The porch is lower than the first floor; hence, there are additional stairs in the

vestibule to the level of the nave.

6. Chimney: The chimney at the northeast corner of the church is sheathed in wood; it is thus a major architectural element, balancing the mass of the tower. The top of the chimney projects through a hipped "roof" with bracketed cornice. Eight wrought-iron stanchions decorated with strap S-scrolls are attached to this roof. They in turn support a metal, square-based, pyramidal turret, surmounted by a finial.
7. Openings: In the center of the main facade is a large three-part gothic window with wooden tracery. Beneath it, in the basement facade, there are two segmentally arched windows with two-over-two-light double-hung sash. The tower has a single pointed window on the main floor level and two narrower lancets above. The four windows along the main-floor side elevations are similar to the main-floor tower window. The windows of the main facade and upper tower have arched frames; the arches in the other windows are defined by the pointed upper sash which is set within a regular rectangular frame. The main entrance with pointed surround is on the west face of the tower; it contains double sliding wooden doors and a chamfered lintel beam, with tympanum above.
8. Roof:
  - a. The roof is gabled, with the ridge perpendicular to the street facade.
  - b. Cornice: The eaves and raking trim are plain.
  - c. Tower: The entrance tower consists of two stories on a raised basement and a steep spire. On the California Street facade there is a two-light pointed lancet window at the main-floor level, two three-light lancet windows at the second-floor level, and a segmentally arched window with two-over-two-light double-hung sash in the basement. The spire rises from a low, square pyramidal roof that develops into an octagonal pyramid with steeply sloped sides. Alternate faces of the octagon have gabled dormers at the bases; the dormers have louvered openings. The roof of the tower has a simple, bracketed cornice; the spire is surmounted by a finial. The tower contains a bell.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The main block of the church is a single large room entered from a small vestibule in the base of the tower. Six angled wooden steps lead from the level of the vestibule to the level of the main floor.
2. Flooring: At present the floor is carpeted.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: A wainscoting of vertical boards alternately light and dark brown in color is carried around the sides and across the front, where it forms a chancel rail. (A similar wainscoting is used on the walls of the entrance vestibule and stairwell.) The upper walls, now faced with composition board, were probably plastered. The ceiling is trough-shaped and faced with smooth boards.
4. Openings: The window and door openings have molded architraves on the interior. The stained-glass windows have non-representational patterns of tan and gray set in brighter borders. The colors were either painted or fused onto the glass. The windows are original to the church, installed in 1880.
5. Fixtures: The pulpit and three ministers' chairs are of gothic style and are contemporary with the building. A bank of fixed wooden pews fills the center of the church; a partition extends down the center of this bank. The aisles run along the side walls. There are two circular ventilators in the ceiling.
6. Lighting: Eight two-arm brass chandeliers hang from the ceiling. These are powered by electricity.

C. Site and Surroundings:

The building occupies a site at the northeast corner of East California and Sixth Streets. The land slopes to the north, so that the basement opens at ground level on the north end. The church is set back from the lot line and is landscaped with trees and shrubs.

D. Original Appearance:

Originally, the basement was painted to resemble a stone base, with white joints on a gray background. The exterior of the church was painted in contrasting colors, so that the framework and sheathing members stood out as separate elements of the design. The original flooring was wooden and the walls above the wainscoting were plastered, or perhaps papered over boards.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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